

Warembori language

Warembori (native name *Waremboivoro*) is a moribund language spoken by about 600 people in Warembori village, Mamberamo Hilir District, Mamberamo Raya Regency, located around river mouths on the north coast of Papua, Indonesia.

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Classification

Classification is in dispute. Mark Donohue thinks it is related to Yoke, forming together the Lower Mamberamo family. On a 200 word list, they share 33%. Also there are some grammar similarities. According to Donohue, Warembori is heavily influenced by Austronesian languages to the west, in both vocabulary and grammar, Yoke is less influenced by them. Malcolm Ross thinks Warembori is a papuanised Austronesian language. He leaves Yoke unclassified due to lack of data, apparently referring to the fact that Donohue did not publish independent pronouns in Yoke. He did publish subject prefixes on verbs, which are very similar to Warembori, and the singular prefixes are also remarkably similar to two Kwerba family languages, namely Kauwera and Airoran, suggesting either borrowing or a distant relationship to Kwerba, though the Kwerba family shares almost no vocabulary with the Lower Mamberamo family. The Lower Mamberamo plural prefixes are similar to Austronesian, as are the plural object suffixes and, at least in Warembori, plural independent pronouns.

Phonology

Vowels

	<u>Front</u>	<u>Back</u>
<u>High</u>	i	u
<u>Mid</u>	e	o
<u>Low</u>	a	

Warembori	
Waremboivoro	
Pronunciation	[ˈwɑɾɛmbɔiβoro]
Native to	Indonesia
Region	Warembori village, Mamberamo Hilir District, Mamberamo Raya Regency, Papua
Native speakers	600 (1998) ^[1]
Language family	Lower Mamberamo <ul style="list-style-type: none">Warembori
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	wsa
Glottolog	ware1253 (http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/ware1253) ^[2]

Consonants

		<u>Bilabial</u>	<u>Alveolar</u>	<u>Palatal</u>	<u>Velar</u>
<u>Stop</u>	<u>Voiceless</u>	p	t		k
	<u>Voiced</u>	b	d		
	“Heavy”	ʔb	ʔd		
<u>Nasal</u>	<u>Voiced</u>	m	n		
	“Heavy”	ʔm	ʔn		
<u>Fricative</u>	<u>Voiceless</u>		s		
<u>Semivowel</u>	<u>Voiced</u>	w		j	

The sequence /nk/ is realized as [ŋg].

The light voiced stops /b d/ lenite to [β r] between vowels within a word. The heavy stops do not lenite.

When a nasal is followed by a heavy plosive, it is lengthened, i.e. /mʔb/ [mːb] /nʔd/ [nːd]. When not followed by a stop, heavy nasals are long and preceded by a glottal closure, i.e. /ʔm/ [ʔmː] /ʔn/ [ʔnː]. Heavy consonants also attract stress.

Some minimal pairs of heavy consonants are:^{[3]:502}

- *bo* ‘mouth’, ʔ*bo* ‘thorn’
- *ane* ‘crocodile’, a ʔ*ne* ‘jungle’

Grammar

The independent pronouns are:

	<u>sg.</u>	<u>du.</u>	<u>pl.</u>
<u>Incl.</u>	iwi	amui	ami
<u>Excl.</u>		kui	ki
2	awi	mui	mi
3	yi	tui	ti

The dual pronouns are derived from the plural via the infix ⟨u⟩. This parallels the nearby Austronesian Cenderawasih languages, which derive the dual from the plural with *du* or *ru*, from *Dua ‘two’. The plural pronouns *ami*, *ki*, *mi*, *ti*, in turn, appear to be Austronesian in origin, from *kami, *kita, *kamiu, *siDa (the latter via **tira). Although 3sg *yi* might also derive from Austronesian *ia, 1sg *iwi* and 2sc *awi*, the most basic pronouns, have no parallel in Austronesian. However, the basic pronouns *iwi*, *awi*, *yi*, *ki*, *mi*, *ti* resemble Yoke *eβu*, *aβu* *iβu*, *kiβu*, *miβu*, *siβu*, illustrating the strong Austronesian influence on both languages.

Possessive prefixes on nouns are nearly identical to subject prefixes on verbs. The object suffixes are also similar; the paradigm is very close to that of Yoke, apart from an inclusive-exclusive distinction which is not completely grammaticalized in the case of possessives.

	Possessive	Subject	Object
1sg	e-	i-, e-, ja-	-ewi, -e(o)
2sg	a-	u-, wa-, a-	-awi, -a(o)
3sg	i-, Ø-	i-, ja- Ø-	-i, -i(o)
1ex	ami	ami-, ama-, ame-	-mo, -m(o)
1in	ki-, ke-	ki-, ka-, ke-	-ki, -k(o)
2pl	mi-, me-	mi-, ma-, me-	-mi, -m(o)
3pl	ti-, te-	ti-, ta-, te-	-ti, -t(o)

The singular prefixes of Warembori and Yoke are nearly identical to the 1sg *e-*, 2sg *a-*, 3sg *i-* of the Kwerba languages Kauwera and Aioran. However, Kwerba has no more basic vocabulary in common with the Lower Mamberamo family than what is expected by chance.

Writing system

Warembori is written in a Latin alphabet based on the Indonesian. It represents phonetic, rather than phonemic, distinctions. In particular:

- /b/ [β] is written **v**
- /d/ [r] is written **r**
- /nk/ [ŋg] is written **ngg**

References

1. Warembori (<https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/wsa/>) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
 2. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Warembori" (<http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/ware1253>). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
 3. Foley, William A. (2018). "The languages of Northwest New Guinea". In Palmer, Bill (ed.). *The Languages and Linguistics of the New Guinea Area: A Comprehensive Guide*. The World of Linguistics. 4. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton. pp. 433–568. ISBN 978-3-11-028642-7.
- Donohue, Mark (1999). *Warembori*. Languages of the World/Materials 341. München: Lincom Europa.
 - Rumaikewi, Luther, Lea Rumansao and Mark Donohue. 1998. *Warembori Dictionary*. Unpublished ms, University of Sydney.

External links

- Donohue, 1998, 'Warembori, and the Lower Mamberamo family' (<https://web.archive.org/web/20030918103622/http://courses.nus.edu.sg/course/ellmd/warembori.html>)
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